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The Pellett Family's EUB Heritage by C. Edwin Pellett

Both of my parents, Rev. Darius Harold Pellett (1890-1972) and Celia Austin Pellett (1889-1970) were ministers in the former United Brethren in Christ denomination (UB). Celia Austin lived in Terra Haute, Indiana, and began her ministry at the age of 16 in the UB church in Brazil, Indiana, then a part of the White River Conference. Darius Pellett lived in Warsaw, Indiana, and was a member of the St. Joseph UB Conference in northern Indiana.

Darius and Celia met at Indiana Central College in 1914. Since neither were high school graduates, they enrolled in the Academy program of the college from which they received a diploma in 1918. In August they were married and appointed to the UB church in Lebanon (IN) in the White River Conference. Their next two appointments (the Walnut Creek UB church near Lake Winona and the UB church in Nappanee (IN), however, were in the St. Joseph Conference to which Celia transferred her membership.

In 1927 at the age of 37, Darius Pellett enrolled in the diploma program at Bonebrake Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. Celia was permitted to audit classes as her schedule allowed. During the first two years at Bonebrake Darius served a two-point charge in Deshler (OH) and at the Oakdale UB church a few miles from Deshler. He commuted on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad to seminary each Monday and Friday.

During my father's senior year (1929-1930) our family moved to North Dayton for a short time, but spent most of the year living on the 3rd floor of Fout Hall on the seminary campus. At that time I was five years old. Dad graduated in the Class of 1930 (diploma program) and was appointed to the UB church in North Manchester (IN). From that time on he and mother served

churches in the St. Joseph Conference and its successor North Indiana Conference of the EUB Church. They retired in 1959 and eventually moved to Otterbein Home near Lebanon, Ohio. Celia died in June of 1970 and Darius in October of 1972.

Darius and Celia had three sons. Harold Austin Pellett (1920-1981) eventually enrolled at Indiana Central College in 1938 and graduated in the Class of 1942. He then enrolled in Bonebrake Seminary in the fall of 1942, but dropped out before the end of the year. Later he returned and graduated with the Class of 1949. He began his ministry in the Indiana North (EUB) but left the denomination to be ordained in the Episcopal Church where he served the remainder of his career. He died in March of 1981.

Lee Wesley Pellett (1922-1987) enrolled as a student at Indiana Central College in the fall of 1940. I, Charles Edwin Pellett (1924-), followed him two years later. But I did not stay at Indiana Central long as both Lee and I enlisted in the Reserve Officer's Candidate program of the U.S. Army. Wesley was sent to Camp Seibert, Alabama, for basic training in chemical warfare. Then he was sent to Anchorage, Alaska, where he served until his discharge in June 1946. Later he returned to Indiana Central College and graduated in 1952. He spent his career as a high school teacher and, after a serious illness, died in December, 1987.

After enlisting I was sent to Camp Roberts, California, for basic training in field artillery (105mm howitzers). On October 28, 1943, I was sent to the Fiji Islands in the southwest Pacific where I joined the Americal Division. Since this division had fought at Guadalcanal, they were in need of replacements. Our next assignment was

combat on Bougainville Island in the Northern Solomon Islands. While there I was appointed an assistant to Chaplain Captain Joseph Tucker Riley, a Methodist minister from Washington, D.C., and later to Chaplain Captain Ollie V. Elkins, a Methodist minister from the Tennessee Conference.

From Bougainville the American Division was sent to Leyte Island in the Philippines to train for a beachhead landing at Cebu Island in the Philippines. While we were there the atomic bombs were dropped on Japan, bringing an end to the war. On September 12, 1945 the American Division landed at Yokohama, Japan, as part of the occupation forces. During Thanksgiving week, along with 5,500 other soldiers, we were shipped to Fort Lewis, Tacoma, Washington. From there I traveled by train to Camp Atterbury (IN) where I was discharged on December 6, 1945.

My parents were serving a UB church in Decatur (IN) and I lived with them for a time. In the spring of 1946 I enrolled in courses at the Indiana University-Purdue University extension in Ft. Wayne (IN) traveling back and forth by bus. When I learned that Indiana Central was reinstating football in the fall of 1946, I re-enrolled. During my years at ICC I not only played football, but sang in the college choir, played euphonium in the college band, sang in and served as a driver for a male quartet, and served as a driver for a women's trio. Both groups sang in churches in Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin and were part of the "marketing" effort of the college.

In November 1946 I was part of a group of five ICC students who drove to Johnstown, Pennsylvania, where we were part of the conference that united the United Brethren and Evangelical denominations into the Evangelical United Brethren Church. I graduated from ICC in the Class of 1949 and that fall enrolled in Bonebrake Seminary.

During my years at Bonebrake I sang in the choir and also in a male quartet. My roommate, George Warheit, and I lived in the same Fout Hall where I had lived as a five-year old. I also served as president of the dormitory council during my senior year. With more students with children enrolling in the Seminary a major project was the

creation of a playground area with swings to accommodate the children's needs.

To help pay for my education I worked on the grounds and maintenance crew under the direction of Mr. Jake Heckman. Besides cutting grass, painting, and making minor repairs our major project in the summer and fall of 1951 was adding electrical and plumbing services to Fout Hall in preparation for the installation of stoves and refrigerators in the units for married couples. I was assigned the job of using a jack-hammer to cut openings in the 27-inch thick wall at the front steps to make way for the new electrical service. Also holes had to be cut in closet ceilings for the installation of exhaust fans.

In the fall of 1950 (the beginning of my 2nd year at Bonebrake) I was hired as choir director at Southern Hills EUB Church in the southern part of Dayton. Along with my campus work, this position allowed me to cover the cost of my education. Rev. Louis O. Odon was the pastor at Southern Hills and his 22-year old daughter, Katharine, sang in the choir. Although almost always late for rehearsal, she was single and I kept an eye on her! It took several months, but I finally got up enough nerve to ask her for a date. In August 1951 I asked her to marry me and she said "Yes!" We were married on Friday, September 28, 1951 at the Southern Hills church with both fathers officiating.

Katharine's parents, Rev. Louis O. Oden (1905-1982) and Dorothy (1904-2006), lived in Cleveland, Ohio, where Louis was affiliated with the Ohio German Conference of the UB church. He and Rev. Harvey Hahn, longtime pastor in Dayton, received their quarterly conference licenses at the Clough UB Church, Cincinnati in 1928—the last so recognized before the Ohio German Conference was disbanded in 1930. Rev. Odon had been appointed to the Cleveland 3rd UB Church. Bishop Arthur R. Clippinger invited him to move to Dayton to serve the Zion UB Church, a German-speaking congregation in the Miami Conference and to attend Bonebrake Seminary. He enrolled in the fall of 1930 and graduated in the Class of 1933.

During his pastorates, Rev. Odon served the Harshman UB Church in Dayton, the UB church in New Madison (OH), the Southern Hills Church and the Wayne Avenue UB Church in Dayton. In

1961 he was appointed Director of Development for the Ohio Miami Conference the position from which he retired in 1971. Even after retirement he continued in the same position for four more years in the newly formed West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church. He and Dorothy resided in Kettering (OH) until his death in September 1982. In April 2001 Dorothy moved to the Otterbein Home and resided there until her death on March 6, 2006 at the age of 101 years and six months!

I graduated from Bonebrake in the Class of 1952. At the June 1952 session of the Ohio Miami Conference of the EUB Church in Germantown (OH) I was appointed to the Sulphur Grove EUB Church in North Dayton. In August 1952 I was ordained in the Indiana North Annual Conference session at Lake Wawasee, Indiana. My credentials were then transferred to the Ohio Miami Conference. After nearly nine years at Sulphur Grove, I had a mid-year appointment to Trinity EUB Church followed by Beardshear EUB Church, both in Dayton. After the EUB-Methodist merger we served Trinity United Methodist Church in Defiance (OH), High Street UM in Springfield, and Sharronville UM in northern Cincinnati. I retired from the Sharronville appointment on February 1, 1989, and we continued to reside in Sharronville until 2011 when we moved to Otterbein Home in Lebanon.

Katharine and I are the parents of four children: twin daughters Karen Dorothy and Marcia Katharine (September 22, 1952); Philip Edwin (November 20, 1954); and Scott Louis (June 26, 1959). Karen graduated from Otterbein College, enrolled at United Theological Seminary in 1982, and graduated in the Class of 1985. She was ordained during the West Ohio Conference at Lakeside (OH) in June 1987 and served several churches in the conference. She served 13 years as Chaplain for the Big Bend Hospice in Tallahassee, Florida, where she is now retired.

Marcia K. Rothgeb is a registered nurse and Assistant Professor of Nursing at Ivy Technical College in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. Dr. Philip E. Pellett is a virologist, professor, and department chair at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. Scott L. Pellett is a construction superintendent in the construction industry and is presently involved in building towers in Calgary,

Alberta, Canada. From this family we are proud to have eight grandchildren and two great grandsons!

During retirement I have filled pulpits for pastors on vacation or because of illness, and have served as an interim pastor four times until fulltime appointments can be made. Katharine and I serve on the Advisory Council of the Center for the EUB Heritage housed at United Theological Seminary thus continuing our connection with the seminary that has covered a span of 89 years! Because of our families' connections to United Seminary we were disappointed when it moved from the campus where we had such fond memories to its present location. But since visiting the new campus many times we are impressed with the facilities and pleased with the positive attitude of the faculty, administration, and students whom we have met. We believe United Theological Seminary has served the church and society well in the past and will continue to do so in the years to come!

It Began on a Beautiful Spring Day

by
Paul Stuckey

Professor Merl Harner was a relatively new faculty member of the Bonebrake Theological Seminary faculty. It was a beautiful spring day and he was teaching a New Testament class on the Apostle Paul when he heard a knock on his classroom door. He answered the knock and was summoned to the yard outside Bonebrake Hall. That was where his young son had been playing while dad taught his class.

When Professor Harner reached the yard he heard the shocking news that his son had been killed accidentally. A seminary student, John Smith, had been running a large lawn roller, had not seen Professor and Mrs. Harner's son, had run over him and killed him. Standing there in a state of stunned disbelief Professor Harner saw that deeply distraught student, paused in the midst of his own grief, ran over to John Smith, put his arms around him and spoke the unbelievable words, "How are you doing John?"

In this situation any other parent in the world would have lashed out in anger at the young man

who had just killed his son. But Merl Harner spoke words of caring and compassion to the person who had inadvertently taken his son's life.

What an amazing story of grace and forgiveness in one of life's most tragic hours. What an unbelievable incarnation of amazing grace!

I had not been a seminary student for long before I heard this moving story. Soon I became a teller and re-teller of this story.

But that was all I knew of the story until I was privileged to succeed Dr. M.J. Miller, who had been pastor of First EUB Church (now United Methodist Church of the Master) on the campus of Otterbein College in Westerville, Ohio, for 22 years. It was then that I became the pastor of Dr. & Mrs. John Smith and his parents Dr. & Mrs. J.F. Smith. I did not meet John for a while because he was a missionary serving as a medical doctor on the staff of Ryder Memorial Hospital in Humacao, Puerto Rico.

What I learned was that John Smith completed his theological education at Bonebrake Seminary, then went to medical school, and afterwards was investing his life in bringing a healing ministry to the people of Puerto Rico. He was so deeply respected and revered that during that time he was given the highest humanitarian award Puerto Rico gives for selfless service.

When I became the pastor of the Smith family I also met John's parents. His father, Dr. J.F. Smith had been a distinguished speech professor at Otterbein until mandatory retirement (at that time tenured faculty members lost their tenure and were retired at age 65). Soon after retirement he learned that the old rocking chair was not for him and went back to Otterbein and asked if there were any employment opportunities available. The answer was "No. The only job we have available is a janitor in the gym." Professor Smith said "I'll take it"—and take it he did! He had not been on the job too long until he suffered a blow on the head that left him legally blind.

I was amazed by Dr. J.F. Smith from the first moment I met him. I'd see him making his way carefully to and from the stores on the brick sidewalks of West College Avenue which ran in front of the parsonage and my study in the church. Each Friday afternoon, after the Sunday bulletins were ready, he'd stop by the church to pick up a bulletin to take home, saying "I'm taking this home so I can learn the liturgy. My wife will read

it to me so I can learn it and be ready to actively participate. I can't see and she can't hear. She's my eyes and I'm her ears." I immediately called him my speech professor and sought his professional advice and counsel.

Professor Smith's story became widely known and Charles Kuralt of CBS News came to Westerville to interview him for the "On the Road Show." Charles Kuralt asked him about his outlook on life. Professor Smith said, "Life is great! There are lots of great books (he listened regularly to the "Living Books" on tape), wonderful people, and beautiful girls. Life is great!"

I was the pastor for Dr. & Mrs. J.F. Smith during their last days and the upbeat spirit of this amazing man lived on as long as he lived. After his death the family moved Mrs. Smith to the Westerville Convalescent Center for the care she needed. A few weeks after the move I called to see how she was doing. She was nowhere to be found. I inquired and was advised she was in Occupation Therapy. We had a good visit but she was making baggy strip, coat hanger Christmas wreaths and never missed a beat during the entire visit. When one of the staff members came in she asked in a loud voice, "Don't you think we ought to give the minister one of these?" I did not say a word, concluded the visit, and went to make more calls. When I arrived home at the end of the afternoon, I found they had given the minister one of the wreaths.

John Smith accidentally killed Professor & Mrs. Harner's son one spring afternoon. He was surrounded by deep forgiveness and amazing grace and went on to become a healer of body, mind, and spirit ministering to the least of our brothers and sisters. The grace he experienced that day, coupled with the "can do" spirit given to him by his parents, and the amazing inner spirit of Dr. John Smith caused the story of compassion, caring, and amazing grace to go on and on and caused many people to refer to Dr. Smith as "the most Christ-like person I've ever known." As one who was privileged to be his pastor and friend, I would join them in this affirmation. And it all began with a terrible tragedy.

Paul Stuckey is a retired UMC pastor living in Kettering, Ohio.

To Preach or To Teach—or Both? by Robert L. Frey

George W. Frey was professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at the Evangelical School of Theology and United Theological Seminary for 33 years. Prior to that time he served 10 years in the parish pastorate of the Central Pennsylvania Conference. He wrote an autobiography for his grandchildren and it is from that document (unless otherwise noted quotations are from that document) and from conversations with him that the following essay is drawn.

While most of us are indebted to teachers who have influenced us early in our lives, to George W. Frey such influence was perhaps greater than for most. He was born in Penns Creek, Pennsylvania, to George W.¹ and Mayme E. Frey. Thus until the death of his father in 1958, George had the appellation "Jr." attached to his name to distinguish him from his father. During young George's youth, United Evangelical and later Evangelical Church pastors moved frequently, thus making it difficult for George to develop long-term friends. Perhaps that is why teachers were so important to him.

George Frey's formal education began in Idaville where he had to walk about two miles to school. His recollection of his first teacher was strong: "My first grade teacher was a most lovely and gracious person. We loved her and studied hard for her. . . Later in life I visited this teacher who maintained her wonderful personality to the end of her life. She had a profound influence on me." By the time his family moved from Idaville [where his father's stay was longer than usual because of restrictions imposed by World War I], George had finished fourth grade. Interestingly, he had little positive or negative recollections of his teachers from 2nd through 4th grade.

Unfortunately not all of George's teachers were like his first grade teacher. The next move to Spring Mills led to an unpleasant year for him. About Spring Mills he said: "But the biggest source of unhappiness was the school. I was in 5th grade and the teacher was brutal, mean, and [he] had two pets, . . . The rest of us took the full blow of his powerful arms and empty head." In conversations with me George made it clear that this teacher was the worst he experienced in his educational career.

But the family only stayed one year in Spring Mills before moving to the Bryansville circuit. In the two-room school near the church "I had my first fully college trained teacher, Helen Smith. She was a tremendous teacher taking a deep personal interest in her pupils. . . I found great joy in study and learning was a delight." It was in Helen Smith's class that George first developed a love for poetry and committed to memory "some truly wonderful poetry" that he could recite for the rest of his life. He loved particularly the poetry of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and John Greenleaf Whittier.

George's mother was a piano teacher and he was required to practice at least 30 minutes a day—except for Sunday. Although he resisted this regimen with little success, it eventually paid off and by the time he was a teen-ager he played for Sunday school and later for church services and weddings.

After two happy years in Bryansville, the family moved to Hanover. Here young George entered high school and had outstanding teachers. "My English teacher was Janet Kaltreider who later married Dr. Kenneth Benfer,² who was our doctor years later when we lived in York." She "taught me to love and enjoy Shakespeare especially." His Latin teacher was a Miss Long who started George on an interest in languages. "I loved Latin and achieved a mastery of Latin fundamentals." This probably was a strong precursor to his interest in Hebrew.

The next move caused a significant crisis for young George. Liverpool was a small riverside town north of Harrisburg. Here he encountered a high school with 27 students (compared to the 500+ in Hanover) and two teachers. "I knew ten times as much Latin as the teacher" was George's assessment. After one year of "marking time" his parents decided to transfer George to the high school in Duncannon. But Duncannon was not "next door." For the final years of his public schooling George had to catch a Greyhound bus at 6:30 each morning, ride 15 miles to the Clarks Ferry Bridge, and then walk about two miles to the school. In the evening this route was reversed getting him home about suppertime. He carried papers for the Harrisburg *Evening Sun* and by the time his deliveries were done and his homework was finished it was bedtime. There was no time for "socializing" with the youth of Liverpool.

George's final two years in high school convinced him that public school teaching was the career for him. He said of his Duncannon years: "My teachers were absolutely terrific. Miss Pauline Young, a Bucknell grad, took me through Caesar and Cicero (Latin) in one year. Her patience and teaching skill was beyond comparison." Two of his teachers Mrs. Bell and his geometry teacher had master's degrees from Columbia University and the University of Michigan—the first with postgraduate degrees that George had encountered. Miss Ethel Taylor a graduate of Susquehanna University was his history teacher and later in life George visited Mrs Bell and Miss Taylor. Of his Duncannon education George said "... these last two years in high school were solid and really prepared me for college. I had the privilege of being selected to give the senior student oration—a real honor to be sure."

But was college a possibility? After all in the year of George's high school graduation—1930—the depression was beginning to take its toll on the country. His father's already meagre salary was reduced and in some months he got no pay at all. But George Sr.—a man of few words—had quietly saved enough money for George Jr. to continue his education at Albright College. Here he encountered his first doctoral-trained faculty members. Two of his favorite teachers were in the sciences—Dr. Clarence Horn and Dr. Marcus Green. "Dr. Horn has been a strong disciplinarian in his department, insisting upon a rigorous training for all those students under his care. The better students have always appreciated this thoroughness, while those of mediocre ability or who have resented the necessity to work hard, have at times trembled at the consequences. All of Dr. Horn's students recall moments when his indignation flared over poor preparation, yet in retrospect most of them smile at the results his explosions achieved in terms of improved work."³ George Frey testified to being on the receiving end of some of Prof. Horn's scorn, but respected him for demanding excellence.

The faculty member who had the most influence on George, however, was Dr. Raymond W. Albright (a direct descendant of Jacob Albright) who taught primarily in the seminary associated with Albright College (Evangelical School of Theology). In George's sophomore

year Dr. Albright accidentally overheard George play the piano. "He [Albright] wanted an accompanist for him when he played clarinet solos as he did so often. He gave me a composition by Vivaldi, and we struck up a friendship that lasted until his death. From that moment on he took me along to the Met operas when they performed in Philadelphia. He also took me to hear the Philadelphia orchestra." The world of "big time" classical music had eluded this young man from small town and rural Pennsylvania. It was a whole new world that led George to a lifelong love of classical music and opera.

In 1934 George graduated from Albright College. Majoring in English and taking a wide variety of courses [primarily because he took summer courses at Bloomsburg State College] he was able to gain teaching certification in English, Latin, social studies, and general science. Such versatility should have made him a candidate for many jobs. But 1934 was perhaps the worst year in the history of the United States to look for a teaching position. There were simply none! The best he could do was to secure a graduate assistantship in English at the University of Montana for the fall of 1935—a year away. What to do in the meantime?

George had been granted a preaching license in his sophomore year at Albright, but as he later told me it was primarily at his Dad's wish and did not represent his plan for the future. Nevertheless, at Dr. Albright's suggestion George decided to take courses at the Evangelical

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School of Theology until he could head west for a graduate degree. George said "I had no intention, even at this point, of being a minister." But events took an unexpected turn. Early in 1935 District Superintendent Dr. A.F. Weaver (who had been granted an honorary degree at George's graduation) asked him to fill a charge on a temporary basis. George recalls, "I reluctantly said 'yes,' . . . Inwardly I said 'One year—no more.' . . . I preached my first sermon on my 22nd birthday, March 17, 1935!"

George was assigned to the Hanover Circuit which his Dad had served about 10 years earlier. "The year that followed shattered many dreams [of becoming a teacher] and I came to feel the pastorate would be challenging." But most important, on this charge he met Romaine Rohrbaugh who was to become his wife of more than 60 years. Before the wedding George was assigned to the Bryansville charge, another one that his Dad had served about 10 years earlier. So in two cases the "preacher's kid" came back as the pastor. George said that posed no problem and it was somewhat of an advantage because he knew some of the people from the outset.

In 1939 George was transferred to York Bethlehem church. During the World War II years George did experience public school teaching. Because of the number of men drafted, many teaching positions in area high schools were vacant. There was a need to find qualified substitute teachers. George had a valid teaching certificate and volunteered to help. He was assigned to a number of schools in addition to his fulltime pastorate. At one point he taught at his wife's high school *alma mater* and had his brother-in-law in class. He said he enjoyed these teaching experiences and several times questioned whether to stay in the ministry or move into teaching. But before the war ended this dilemma was solved most unexpectedly.

One Sunday in 1944 George Frey had Dr. J.A. Heck, President of the Evangelical School of Theology as a guest speaker. By this time George had earned an S.T.M. degree from Gettysburg Seminary and had taken some courses from the famous Dr. William Foxwell Albright at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. After the service Dr. Heck asked George if he would take a walk with him. During that walk Dr. Heck offered George a teaching position at the Evangelical

School of Theology. If he accepted the position, Dr. Heck said, he would have to earn a Ph.D. degree. George realized that in accepting the position he would be "teaching," although far from what he envisioned in 1934 or even during his temporary teaching in the war years.

Since Dr. Heck was not at the seminary when George was a student, why did he choose him as a faculty member? Years later George speculated that it was on the recommendation of Dr. Albright and/or Dr. Weaver, his district superintendent and long-time family friend. George never knew for certain how this life-changing event happened—but he certainly welcomed it!

George started teaching at the Evangelical School of Theology in 1945 thus beginning a 33 year teaching career at what is now known as United Theological Seminary. He received his Ph.D. from Drew University in 1947 studying under John Patterson a Scottish-educated Old Testament scholar.

Thus a somewhat circuitous route with the help of many people led George W. Frey to doing what he thought he was best at doing from a relatively early age--teaching. But along the way he acquired significant experience in the pastorate, experience on which he drew to advise students over the years. But teaching was his passion and his students his greatest reward as many went on to serve the church as pastors, professors, seminary presidents, general church officers, and bishops.

¹For more on George W. Frey, Sr. see *Telescope-Messenger*, "Finances of a Country Preacher," Vol. 16, No. 2, Summer 2006, 1-4.

²Rev. Dr. Kenneth Benfer was a minister and a doctor. He was a pastor, a medical missionary to Nigeria, a Colonel in the medical corps in World War II (see *Somewhere in North Africa*, privately printed in Ephrata, PA. 1985), and a beloved family doctor who was the attending physician at the birth of Robert Frey.

³F. Wilbur Gingrich and Eugene H. Barth, *A History of Albright College*, (Reading, Pa.) 1955, p. 347.

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